

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 INR-05 L-01 ACDA-05

NSAE-00 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 AEC-05 SS-15 NSC-05 /064 W

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R 041840Z NOV 74

FM USMISSION NATO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8578

SECDEF WASHDC

INFO USCINCEUR

USNMR SHAPE

USLOSACLANT

CINCLANT

USDOCOSOUTH

C O N F I D E N T I A L USNATO 6121

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MPOL, NATO

SUBJECT: KEY ELEMENTS OF MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE: DURATION AND INTENSITY
OF HOSTILITIES

REF: A. USNATO 4527; B. USNATO 5881; C. USNATO 6011

IS HAS CIRCULATED DRC/N(74)31, SUBJECT: DURATION AND INTENSITY OF
HOSTILITIES, AS A REDRAFT OF CORRESPONDING LANGUAGE CONTAINED IN DRC/
WP(74)4 (REF A). NEW LANGUAGE IS IMPROVEMENT OVER OLD IN
PROVIDING FOR SUSTAINED CONVENTIONAL DEFENSE, BUT STILL LEANS TOWARD
NECESSITY FOR EARLY NUCLEAR DECISION. IN FORTHCOMING DRC DISCUSSION
OF THIS KEY ELEMENT (NOVEMBER 7 OR 8), MISSION INTENDS TO STRESS
POINTS COVERED REF B, PLACING EMPHASIS ON SUSTAINING CAPABILITY,
DEFINED AS ABILITY TO OUTLAST THE WP FOR PLAUSIBLE SCENARIOS.
BEGIN TEXT:

IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE PRECISELY THE PROBABLE
DURATION OF CONVENTIONAL OPERATIONS IN EUROPE. IT IS, HOWEVER,
POSSIBLE TO DRAW SOME CONCLUSIONS FROM THE TACTICS WHICH THE
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WARSAW PACT MIGHT BE EXPECTED TO ADOPT IN LAUNCHING A
CONVENTIONAL ATTACK ON NATO, AND THE FACTORS WHICH WOULD DETERMINE
NATO'S ABILITY TO SUSTAIN AN EFFECTIVE CONVENTIONAL DEFENCE.

2. THE MILITARY DOCTRINES OF THE WARSAW PACT AND THE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THEIR LAND AND AIR FORCES SEEM TO INDICATE THAT THEIR CONCEPT OF ATTACK ENVISAGES HIGHLY MOBILE CONCENTRATIONS OF FORCES, BACKED WITH GREAT FIRE-POWER. THE STAYING POWER OF INDIVIDUAL FORMATIONS MIGHT BE LIMITED, BUT THE MOMENTUM OF THE ASSAULT WOULD BE MAINTAINED BY SUCCESSIVE REPLACEMENT FROM LARGE RESERVES OF FOLLOW-UP FORCES. THEIR AIM WOULD BE TO FORCE A QUICK BREAKTHROUGH OF NATO DEFENCES IN ORDER TO ARRIVE AT DECISIVE MILITARY RESULTS BEFORE THE MANPOWER AND MATERIAL RESOURCES OF THE ALLIANCE COULD BE MOBILISED TO STABILISE THE SITUATION.

3. NATO'S AIMS ARE TO SURVIVE AND WITHSTAND THE INITIAL SHOCK OF ATTACK, AND THEREAFTER TO CONDUCT AN EFFECTIVE DEFENCE IN THE FORWARD AREAS FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE, IN ORDER TO DENY THE WARSAW PACT THE OPPORTUNITY OF ESTABLISHING A FAIT ACCOMPLI, TO PROTECT AS FAR AS POSSIBLE THE SECURITY OF NATO TERRITORY AND POPULATIONS, AND TO GIVE TIME FOR CONSULTATION ON A COLLECTIVE ALLIANCE RESPONSE, INCLUDING THE POSSIBLE USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS. NATO FORCES SHOULD BE CAPABLE OF MAINTAINING A COHERENT CONVENTIONAL DEFENCE UP TO AND AFTER THE POINT AT WHICH A DECISION TO SUE NUCLEAR WEAPONS HAS BEEN TAKEN.

4. THE FORCE CHARACTERISTICS WHICH WILL DETERMINE NATO'S ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS AIM ARE:

(A) SIZE AND READINESS OF STANDING FORCES;

(B) ABILITY OF STANDING FORCES AND WEAPON SYSTEMS TO SURVIVE AND WITHSTAND THE INITIAL ASSAULT;

(C) RAPIDITY OF REINFORCEMENT;

(D) DEPTH OF LOGISTIC SUPPORT.

5. THE SOVIET PERCEPTION OF NATO'S CAPABILITIES IN THESE AREAS ARE BOUND TO INFLUENCE THEIR CALCULATIONS AS TO THE LIKELY CONFIDENTIAL

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SUCCESS OF THEIR ATTACK AND THEIR DECISIONS ON TACTICS AND TIMING.

6. ON ANY CALCULATION OF THE PROBABLE WARNING TIME AVAILABLE (SEE ABOVE) IT IS LIKELY THAT NATO WILL HAVE TO FIGHT THE INITIAL STAGES OF ANY WAR WITH FORCES WHICH ARE ALREADY IN EXISTENCE AND THE LOGISTIC SUPPORT ALREADY IN PLACE. SHAPE STANDARDS CALL FOR NATIONS TO PROVIDE LOGISTIC SUPPORT TO ENABLE THEIR FORCES TO SUSTAIN OPERATIONS FOR 30 DAYS, BUT THIS LEVEL IS NOT AT PRESENT ACHIEVED IN ALL CASES, NOR ARE THE STOCKS, WHEN AVAILABLE, WELL POSITIONED. IN THE CENTRAL REGION THERE IS NO TACTICAL RESERVE. IN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF HIGHLY INTENSIVE OPERATIONS ENVISAGED (AND GIVEN THE ADVANTAGE OF INITIATIVE TO THE WARSAW PACT), THE FORCES AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT NOW AVAILABLE ARE PROBABLY SUFFICIENT

TO MAINTAIN A COHERENT DEFENCE FOR A PERIOD MUCH SHORTER THAN 30 DAYS. THIS PERIOD WILL VARY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE EXTENT OF PREPARATION TIME AVAILABLE, BUT WITH THE PRESENT LEVEL OF FORCES AND LOGISTIC SUPPORT IT IS LIKELY TO BE MEASURED IN DAYS RATHER THAN WEEKS.

7. ON THE FLANKS THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY OF MORE PROLONGED HOSTILITIES ON A LIMITED SCALE AND AT A LOWER LEVEL OF INTENSITY. THE ABILITY OF NATO TO SUSTAIN AN EFFECTIVE DEFENCE AGAINST AN ATTACK OF THIS NATURE WILL BE GOVERNED BY THE FACTORS AT PARAGRAPH 4 ABOVE, AND ALSO, IN THIS CASE, BY THE AVAILABILITY OF READY MOBILISABLE FORCES AND PROVED AND EFFECTIVE ARRANGEMENTS FOR EXTERNAL REINFORCEMENT.

8. IT IS THE MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF NATO DEFENCE PLANNING DURING THE CURRENT PERIOD TO INCREASE THE SURVIVABILITY OF NATO FORCES AND TO PROLONG THEIR ABILITY TO SUSTAIN A CONVENTIONAL DEFENCE AGAINST INTENSIVE ATTACK IN THE FORWARD AREAS. PARTICULAR AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT ARE IDENTIFIED IN PARAGRAPHS ... (CHARACTERISTICS OF FORCES). THE PRINCIPLE SHOULD BE TO ESTABLISH A STRONG AND BALANCED RANGE OF DEFENSIVE CAPABILITIES IN ALL AREAS AND FUNCTIONS ACROSS THE ALLIANCE, PRIORITY BEING GIVEN TO THE CORRECTION OF KNOWN WEAKNESSES. END TEXT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 11 JUN 1999
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 04 NOV 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: garlanwa
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974ATO06121
Document Source: ADS
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: 11652 GDS
Errors: n/a
Film Number: n/a
From: NATO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741185/abbryygp.tel
Line Count: 134
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: n/a
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: A. USNATO 4527; B. USNATO 5881; C. USNATO 6011
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: garlanwa
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 APR 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 APR 2002 by martinml>; APPROVED <28-Oct-2002 by garlanwa>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: KEY ELEMENTS OF MINISTERIAL GUIDANCE: DURATION AND INTENSITY OF HOSTILITIES
TAGS: MPOL, NATO
To: STATE
SECDEF INFO USCINCEUR
USNMR SHAPE
USLOSACLANT
CINCLANT
USDOCOSOUTH
Type: TE

Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005